

## **What We Are**

The U.S. Attorneys' Offices within the U.S. Department of Justice established the Victim/Witness program in 1984. The Victim and Witness Protection Act of 1982 created the program *"to enhance and protect the necessary role of crime victims and witnesses in the criminal justice process: to ensure that the Federal government does all that is possible within limits of available resources to assist victims and witnesses of crime without infringing on the constitutional rights of defendants: and to provide a model for legislation for state and local governments."*

All victims and witnesses of Federal crime receive assistance and protection to which they are entitled to under the law. This assistance is available for those who have suffered physical, financial, or emotional traumas, or who have been threatened or intimidated. Special attention will be paid to victims of serious, violent crime.

## **Authority**

Victim and Witness Protection Act 1982 (PL: 97-291 October 12,1982); Crime Control Act of 1990 and 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act a.k.a.: Crime Bill.

## **What We Provide**

- Information and referral to medical and/or social services agencies, to County Victim Compensation program and to local, private and public counseling services.
- Supportive contact and consultation such as court orientation/escort, arrangements for hotel/travel/other fees; employer/credit/victim compensation intervention.
- Information regarding charges filed on the offender; arrest, detention or release of the defendant; on the status of the case which includes all court actions/schedules, any negotiated pleas, trial, sentencing date and sentence imposed.
- Consultation with victims and witnesses regarding the opportunity to provide pretrial/victim impact statements containing information on any trauma and loss suffered.
- Preparation for victims and witnesses as to how to present verbal statements to the court at sentencing.
- Communication on behalf of victims and witnesses with agencies such as

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Tribal

investigators, U.S. Probation, Bureau of Prisons and other public agencies involved in the case.

- Advice to victims regarding necessary documentation needed to establish restitution amount for financial losses. Reimbursement to a victim for financial loss caused by the defendant is an important aspect in repairing damage done to victims. The defendant may be ordered to pay for lost income, funeral expenses, counseling, lost or damaged property and other expenses incurred from the crime committed by the defendant.
- Participation with the U.S. Probation Office to prepare Victim Impact Statement. This may include an interview with the victim to allow the pre-sentence writer firsthand knowledge of the impact of the crime on the victim and/or the community. This assists with recommends for specific conditions of release and/or restitution.
- Immediate emergency assistance to threatened witnesses to guarantee their well-being and availability for trial, other court proceedings or activities related to an ongoing case. The Emergency Witness Assistance Program (EWAP) is usually requested from Assistant U. S. Attorney.